

T H E  
L O U N G E R.

[ N<sup>o</sup> XI. ]

Saturday, April 16. 1785.

To the AUTHOR of the LOUNGER.

*Occupatus nihil agendo.*

S I R,

**A**S I have the honour of being your namesake, and descended from an ancient race of Loungers, I rejoiced when I was informed, that one of our illustrious name and family began to make a figure in the literary world, and to publish his lucubrations weekly in the capital of Scotland. I have spent a great part of my life in studying the genealogies, histories, and characters of the several branches of our flourishing family. With this view, I have visited every city, town, and village in the kingdom, and have had the happiness to meet with near relations in every place, except Paisley, Kilmarnock, and a few dirty manufacturing towns. From the observations I have made in my travels, I am fully convinced that, if all the members of our family take in your Paper, you will be the most popular and successful writer of the present age, and your Works will pass through more editions than either the *Pilgrim's Progress* or *Robinson Crusoe*.

The chief object of all my travels has been, to collect materials for a great Work, in which I have been engaged about fifty years. It is one of the peculiar excellencies of our family, to do nothing in haste. This famous Work will be intitled, *Biographia Loungeriana Scotica*, or, The Lives of the most eminent Loungers of Scotland, from the reign of Fergus I. to the present times. It will make two ponderous volumes in folio, to be published by subscription. The price to subscribers will be *only* six guineas; but to those unfortunate gentlemen who neglect to subscribe, the price may be, I know not how much. The first volume will contain the Lives of the *Strenuous* Loungers, and the second, the Lives of the *Indolent* Loungers. These are the two great branches into which our family is divided. Each volume will be adorned with twenty copperplates, engraved by the most eminent artists, representing the easiest and most graceful postures for lounging in coaches, coffee-houses, taverns, drawing-rooms, play-houses, assembly-rooms, churches, colleges, courts of justice, &c. &c. These plates will be of great utility, not only to fine ladies and fine gentlemen, but also to politicians, preachers,

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professors,

professors, students, lawyers, judges, and many others of all ranks. The frontispiece will be an elegant drawing of the outer Parliament-house in the middle of the Session. To engage gentlemen to do themselves the honour to subscribe, I send you a short article, which I beg you will publish in your entertaining Paper, as a specimen of this excellent work.

“ My late cousin, *Sir Thomas Lounger of Loiterball, in Lingerdale*, was the eldest son of my good uncle Sir Timothy, and his Lady *Mrs Susan Dowdy*, of the *Slatterington* family. Sir Timothy died of a lethargy, with which he had been long afflicted; and Sir Thomas came to the possession of the estate and honours of his ancestors in the twenty-second year of his age. But the estate was then in a very bad condition in all respects. Two-thirds of the rents would hardly pay the interest of the debts—the mansion-house was an old, cold, damp, ruinous castle, in the middle of a great morass—the farms were almost in a state of nature, the rents small and ill paid; the extensive moors and hills yielded little or nothing.

Sir Thomas was then a strong, healthy, young man; and as he had been two winters at the college of Aberdeen, and thought himself much wiser and cleverer than any of his forefathers, he determined to retrieve the ruined fortunes, and revive the faded honours of his family, by paying off all his debts, repairing or rebuilding his castle, draining his morass, improving his farms, cultivating his moors, and planting his hills. But he determined to do all this in the wisest, most cautious, and prudent manner; and never to engage in any undertaking till he had examined every circumstance, and provided against every obstacle and difficulty.

Sir Thomas spent several years in forming plans for the payment of his debts, which he found not so easy a matter as he had imagined. At length he hit upon one which he believed would do the business effectually. He proposed to go to the East Indies, to dethrone half a dozen *Rajabs*, cut the throats of half a million of their subjects, and come home with three or four hundred thousand pounds in his pocket. This project pleased him mightily for some time, till he began to reflect on the great distance of the East Indies, the danger of his being drowned in going or returning, and the still greater danger of being damned, if he destroyed so many of his fellow-creatures, to enrich himself; which made him give up all thoughts of becoming a Nabob. The next scheme Sir Thomas formed for the payment of his debts pleased him better, as it was not attended with so much danger either to his soul or body. When he was about fifty years of age, he came to a resolution to marry some beautiful young lady, of an honourable ancient family,  
with

with a prodigious fortune, that would enable him to pay all his debts, and execute all his projects. He spent several years in searching for such a lady, and at length fixed on Miss Betty Plum. It is true, Miss Betty was neither young nor handsome, and her grandfather had been a cobbler, but she had a great fortune; and after a violent struggle between poverty and pride, he resolved to stoop and make his addresses. But while he was meditating on the most effectual method of doing this, he received the unwelcome news, that his intended bride had married an Irish fortune-hunter. My cousin behaved very much like a gentleman on this occasion. He called Miss Betty all the bad names he had ever heard, cursed the whole sex, and forswore matrimony for ever.

While Sir Thomas was forming schemes for the payment of his debts, he was not unmindful of his old castle, and got many plans, some for repairing, and some for rebuilding it, for draining the morasses, and laying it into a lawn, with gardens, orchards, walks, vistas, &c. But at last he found that this would be more expensive than building a new seat in the modern taste; and he very wisely determined to build a most elegant convenient mansion, for the future residence of his family. But he as wisely resolved not to lay one stone, till he had found the most healthy, pleasant, and commodious spot in his whole estate. Many a long day did he wander in search of this spot, but never could find one to his mind. One was too high, another too low; one too damp, another too dry; the prospect from one was too confined, from another too extensive.

Sir Thomas never forgot the improvement of his farms. That was his favourite taste and study. He chose the most proper places for building substantial convenient farm-houses; he traced and marked the line of all the hedges, ditches, and walls, that would be necessary for inclosing his fields, gardens, and orchards; he carefully examined the soil of every field, and settled the methods of cultivation that would be most proper for each, to bring it to the highest possible degree of fertility: in this he was much assisted by the painful perusal of several excellent systems of agriculture, composed in the garrets of Grubstreet. When he had got all in readiness, he assembled his tenants in the great hall of his castle, laid his plans before them, and in a long elaborate discourse, explained how they were to be carried into execution, concluding with a demand of two guineas a-year of rent for every acre. This harangue, particularly the concluding sentence, produced various strong emotions in the audience. Some grinned, others groaned; some laughed, others cried; some cursed, others prayed: but all declared that they would not give one farthing more rent, nor change their methods of husbandry in the least. Sir Thomas was greatly enraged at the obstinacy of his tenants, and discharged a dreadful



dreadful volley of oaths and threats upon them; but when his passion subsided, and he began to reflect that they were all of his own clan, descended from the younger brothers and bastards of the family, he could not find in his heart to turn any of them out of their farms.

My cousin was equally industrious, and as unsuccessful in his schemes for cultivating his moors. For when he had, by long thought and study, formed one of the most beautiful plans in the world for that purpose, he never could find any person who would execute any part of it.

But still the planting of his hills promised every thing. By long and laborious investigations, he found, that they would admit ten millions of trees, and that these trees, when forty years old, would be worth ten millions Sterling, which would make him the richest subject in Europe. Transported with joy at this prospect, he determined to lose no time. He actually collected ten bushels of beech-mast, and an equal quantity of acorns, and wanted nothing but a proper place for a nursery, to begin his operations; but staying abroad too late, one evening in April, in search of such a place, he got a violent cold, which threw him into a fever, of which he died, in the seventy-fifth year of his age, in the same tattered bed and ruinous castle in which he was born; his debts unpaid, his morals undrained, his farms unimproved, his moors uncultivated, and his hills unplanted."

With a heavy heart, I attended the precious remains of my dear cousin to his grave, and saw a stone laid upon it, with this inscription:

" Hic jacet  
Illustrissimus Dominus *Thomas Lounger de Loiterhall*, Baronettus.  
Dum vixit,  
Multa proposuit,  
Nihil perfecit,  
Secundum morem  
Loungeriorum."

I am, &c.

L. L.

E D I N B U R G H :

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